



**STATE OF HAWAII**

**Executive Office on Early Learning**

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina  
2759 South King Street, Room C6  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on S.B. No. 423, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD

Committee: JHA  
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2025  
Time: 2:00 p.m.  
Location: Conference Room 325

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in strong support of S.B. No. 423, H.D. 1, and respectfully requests that the bill be amended to be effective upon approval.

Last year, it was brought to EOEL's attention that the Early Learning Board must comply with certain requirements of the Federal Head Start Act due to its previous designation as Hawai'i's State Advisory Council for the purposes of the Head Start Act. In 2023, Act 170 restructured the composition of the Early Learning Board and the new structure addressed most of the requirements of the Head Start Act, but not all. The purpose of this measure is to bring the Early Learning Board into compliance with the Federal Head Start Act.

The bill as originally introduced makes the following changes to the composition of the board:

- Adds the State Director of Head Start Collaboration as an Ex officio member; and
- Invites the President of the Head Association of Hawaii, or the president's designee, to serve as an ex-officio member.

In addition to requiring Head Start representation on our State's Advisory Council, the Head Start Act also requires that the board include a representative of local providers of early

childhood education and development services. The current version of the bill adds the following language to Section 302L-1.6, HRS, which explicitly addresses this requirement:

"The board shall invite a representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services to serve as an ex officio, non-voting member if no voting member fulfills this role."

The membership of our current board includes an individual who satisfies this requirement. However, the EOEL appreciates and supports the inclusion of the additional statutory language because it will ensure that this requirement is not accidentally overlooked in future years.

We appreciate the Legislature's continued investment in our youngest keiki and their families and thank you for the opportunity to share these comments in strong support of S.B. No. 423, H.D. 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



ELAINE YAMASHITA  
CHAIRPERSON

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Early Learning Board**  
2759 South King Street, Room C6  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 19, 2025

To: Representative Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Poepoe, Vice-chair  
Members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita, Chair  
Early Learning Board

Re: SB423 HD1 support

Honorable Chair Tamas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

The Early Learning Board (ELB) formulates statewide policy relating to early learning, as well as directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL).

The Early Learning Board strongly supports SB423 HD1. Mahalo for your previous support of this bill. The current draft would bring the ELB in compliance with the Head Start Act, Section 642B, which was the intent of the introduction of the bill.

I sincerely apologize for late testimony. I am learning a lot in my first legislative session as chair.

Respectfully,

Elaine Yamashita  
Early Learning Board Chair  
[elb@eoel.hawaii.gov](mailto:elb@eoel.hawaii.gov)

To: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy  
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure S.B. No. 423, S.D. 1, H.D. 1 – Relating to the Early Learning Board

Hearing: Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 2:00 PM, Conference Room 325

**POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT**

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the committee:

Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS S.B. No. 423, S.D. 1, H.D. 1**, which ensures that the Early Learning Board includes key representatives from the Head Start community, aligning with federal requirements under the Head Start Act, Section 642B.

Head Start programs provide high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services to Hawai'i's most vulnerable keiki and families. By adding the Director of the Hawai'i Head Start State Collaboration Office, or their designee, and inviting the President of the Head Start Association of Hawai'i to serve as ex officio, non-voting members, this bill strengthens the alignment between state early learning policies and federally funded early childhood programs. Furthermore, requiring the Early Learning Board to invite a representative of local early childhood education and development providers ensures that the voices of direct service providers are included in critical discussions affecting the sector.

This measure is essential to maintaining compliance with the Head Start Act while fostering greater coordination between Head Start and state early learning initiatives. Improved collaboration will enhance the quality and accessibility of early childhood education for Hawai'i's keiki, particularly those from underserved communities.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 423, S.D. 1, H.D. 1 to ensure that the Early Learning Board benefits from the expertise and insights of key Head Start representatives.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** on this measure.